

Michael Helsem of Dallas, Texas describes himself as an "esoteric poet with logological leanings", an assessment **Word Ways** readers will surely agree with. Here is his translation of a fifth-century triple acrostic on the new hot springs of Thrasamundus. In keeping with the original, word-spacings and punctuation do not count; evidently the Romans had no desire to speed-read. Alternate words are underlined to enable the modern reader to pick out the message:

The streams still source from flowing waters  
Here good sparks glow beneath the blazing orb  
Roventhrough chasms Nowycladinalabaster  
And enormous columns Edge the Septentrion  
Statues of old deities with their beards of fire

UsufructuaryofeverLastingpeerlessfame  
Norharmsthewarmthallreadthededication  
DiscoverwhatfloodsVernateindeepakai  
UkasehererefreshesOfthedearVandalclan  
Standingforthanksawardeachdeserving

Helsem's next poem weaves an intricate alphabetic pattern on the initial letters of its words:

A zouave-bright yawp asks zeal beyond yours.  
 Certain xeric dews would create xyloid day's-web  
 Easing veldt for us, except very few unicorns  
 Get to habit such glebe. Their halcyon stock  
 Instead rates jeopardy, quite iracund reviewers, jackal  
     quellage,  
 Kwashiorkor. Perhaps less optimism? Keep people liking our  
 Modern, no-nuance masterpieces; mighty nubile, nicely  
     mawkish ...  
 Or loathe power, kiss off literary politics, kerygma  
 Quackery. Just rhyme in qualmless jollity, rave; if  
 Selves have to go singly, help them green.  
 Ultimately, fustian vests each urchin's feverish views enlisted.  
 World dung-xyster crafts with dense xanthic creed  
 Yon baobab zymurgy. Abatis? Yes, but zero axolotl.

His third example is a macaronic sonnet: each odd-numbered line is taken from a well-known author, and the following even-numbered line completes a pangrammatic couplet (uses the remaining letters of the alphabet):

## WELTSCHMERZ OF THE ZEITGEIST

Methought upon the tomb-encumbered shore (C. Ashton Smith)  
 I saw quick dwarves defile a jade Zyxomma.  
 Who loves, raves - 'tis youth's frenzy; but the cure (Byron)  
 That damps quixotic jags so kills the lemma.  
 My hungry eyes though greedy covetize (Spenser)  
 And frequent jokes, wax pebble-cold and stupid:  
 From the mix'd mass one sovereign balm derive (Carow)  
 A joy-zymurgy working quag pellucid;  
 That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse, (Chaucer)  
 Quoth jesting Pilaf to a keloid Zugzwang.  
 Nor dare I question with my jealous thought (Shakespeare)  
 This ziplock vex-bag, since I have for joss  
 Blood-quaffing Mars heaving the iron net (Marlowe)  
 And wicked Jeep to zyme the frith of Luxon.

The following poem was typed entirely with the left hand by  
 Sarah Montoya of Monterey Park, California. On the whole, it prob-  
 ably makes as much sense as most free verse.

## TERSE VERSE DE SARA

Caesar was a czar as was Xerxes  
 Dare a deft feat avec few secrets  
 As we were bested  
 Ad astra star Vega  
 Better read  
 We deserve defeats  
 Dear deceased dead  
 Fate fazes scared braggarts see  
 Few fewer fewest fears fester  
 Facade facets  
 Retreat reassert avec zest  
 Adverse test case treated  
 TWA traverses Qatar Rabat Texas West Va  
 Tax evaders beware vested vertebrates  
 Tbc arrested  
 We are ever eager  
 Revere sacred Easter grace  
 Castrate sated sages  
 Sex starved we vegetate  
 Tattered red taffeta dress et tweed rags  
 Cabarets waste water  
 Cars waste gas  
 Federated verb craft defeats great art  
 Saved wages are sweet  
 Reassert reassess best taste  
 Redress greed  
 Be aware! et cetera